

## Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 BERLIN 04352 01 OF 02 020446Z  
ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10  
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 ICA-11  
/066 W

-----004914 020513Z /11

R 010938Z JUL 78  
FM AMEMBASSY BERLIN  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7701  
INFO AMEMBASSY WARSAW  
AMEMBASSY BELGRADE  
AMEMBASSY BONN  
AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST  
AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST  
AMEMBASSY LONDON  
AMCONSUL MUNICH  
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW  
AMEMBASSY PARIS  
AMEMBASSY PRAGUE  
AMEMBASSY SOFIA  
AMEMBASSY VIENNA  
USMISSION USBERLIN  
USMISSION USNATO  
USDEL MBFR VIENNA

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BERLIN 04352

E.O.11652: GDS  
TAGS: PINT, GE  
SUBJECT: THE EAST GERMAN CHURCH CHALLENGES THE STATE  
ON MILITARY TRAINING FOR YOUTH  
REFS: (A) BERLIN 1751 (NOTAL); (B) BERLIN A-24  
1. SUMMARY: THE EAST GERMAN PROTESTANT CHURCH  
HAS TAKEN OPEN ISSUE WITH THE STATE BY PUBLICLY  
OPPOSING THE INTRODUCTION OF PRE-MILITARY TRAINING IN THE PUBLIC  
SCHOOLS THIS FALL AND HAS ADVISED CHURCH MEMBERS THAT IT WILL SUPPORT  
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 BERLIN 04352 01 OF 02 020446Z

THEIR RESISTANCE TO THE PROGRAM. THIS DEVELOPMENT COMES AFTER A  
A PERIOD OF NOTABLE IMPROVEMENT IN CHURCH-STATE RELATIONS  
AND WAS SPARKED BY A GENUINE AND WIDESPREAD UPSURGE OF OPPOSITION  
TO THE PROGRAM AMONG MANY CHRISTIAN FAMILIES. THE CHURCH  
HAS CHOSEN TO EXPRESS ITS POSITION IN TERMS OF CONTRIBUTING TO THE  
SECURITY OF THE STATE AND OF NOT UNDERMINING THE CREDIBILITY OF  
THE GDR'S "PEACE POLICY. NEVERTHELESS, IT CONSTITUTES THE MOST

SERIOUS CHALLENGE LEVELED AT THE STATE  
FROM THE CHURCH IN YEARS AND MAY BE THE ROCK UPON  
WHICH IMPROVING CHURCH-STATE RELATIONS IN THE GDR  
COULD FOUNDER. END SUMMARY.

2. FOR THE PAST SEVERAL MONTHS EAST GERMAN PARENTS  
HAVE BEEN AWARE OF GOVERNMENT PLANS TO INTRODUCE  
COMPULSORY CIVIL DEFENSE AND PRE-MILITARY TRAINING  
INTO THE NINTH AND TENTH GRADES BEGINNING SEPTEMBER 1  
OF THIS YEAR. THE CIVIL DEFENSE TRAINING WOULD BE  
COMPULSORY FOR BOYS AND GIRLF; THE PRE-MILITARY TRAINING  
"VOLUNTARY" FOR BOYS IN THE SUMMER BEFORE THE TENTH  
GRADE, COMPULSORY DURING THE SCHOOL YEAR. UNTIL NOW  
THERE HAS BEEN NO COMPULSORY MILITARY OR PARA-MILITARY  
TRAINING IN THE EAST GERMAN PRIMARY AND SECONDARY  
SCHOOLS. THE ONLY COMPULSORY TRAINING HAS BEEN  
THROUGH 18-MONTH MILITARY INDUCTION. MILITARY  
TRAINING HAS BEEN PROVIDED ON A "VOLUNTARY" BASIS  
THROUGH THE FDJ AND SPORTS ORGANIZATIONS. FAMILIES  
WHO OBJECTED TO SUCH VOLUNTARY TRAINING COULD AVOID  
IT FOR THEIR CHILDREN, ALTHOUGH AT THE COST OF  
GIVING THEIR CHILDREN A BAD RECORD, THEREBY  
EFFECTIVELY BARRING THEM FROM HIGHER EDUCATION.  
NOW FOR THE FIRST TIME, SOME FORM OF PRE-INDUCTION  
MILITARY TRAINING HAS BECOME MANDATORY FOR EVERYONE.  
THIS PROGRAM HAS ELICITED A GROUNDSWELL OF OPPOSITION  
AMONG MANY CHRISTIAN FAMILIES WHO HAVE KEPT THEIR  
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 BERLIN 04352 01 OF 02 020446Z

CHILDREN OUT OF THE PRE-AND PARA-MILITARY TRAINING  
PROGRAMS OF THE FREE GERMAN YOUTH (FDJ).

3. IN RESPONSE TO THIS OPPOSITION TO MILITARY  
INDOCTRINATION OF GDR YOUTH, THE LEADERSHIP OF THE  
PROTESTANT CHURCH HAS SOUGHT TO CONVINCE STATE  
AUTHORITIES TO RECONSIDER THIS POLICY, BUT WITHOUT  
SUCCESS. CHURCH LEADERS MET WITH STATE SECRETARY  
FOR CHURCH QUESTIONS SEIGEWASSER ON JUNE 1, FOLLOWED  
THIS UP WITH A LETTER TO HIM, AND CULMINATED THIS  
PROCESS WITH A MEETING BETWEEN BISHOP SCHOENHERR  
AND PREMIER STOPH ON JUNE 20. BECAUSE OF THEIR  
FAILURE TO MOVE STATE AUTHORITIES, THE  
LEADERSHIP OF THE CHURCH RESORTED TO A FIVE-PAGE  
LETTER TO THE FAITHFUL WHICH WAS READ FROM THE PULPITS  
OF PROTESTANT CHURCHES IN THE GDR ON SUNDAY, JUNE 25.  
4. THE LETTER ACKNOWLEDGES THE RIGHT OF THE STATE TO  
LOOK AFTER THE SECURITY OF THE COUNTRY BUT QUESTIONS  
THE MEANS BY WHICH REAL SECURITY CAN BE ACHIEVED. IT  
ARGUES THAT GENUINE SECURITY COMES ONLY FROM A PEACE  
BASED ON INTERNATIONAL UNDERSTANDING AND TRUST AND  
THAT A BETTER MEANS OF BUILDING THIS TRUST THAN  
"THINKING IN CLICHES OF FRIEND AND ENEMY" WOULD BE

TO PERMIT TRAVEL BY EAST GERMANS TO NEIGHBORING COUNTRIES TO GET TO KNOW THE PEOPLE BETTER. THE LETTER ARGUES THAT "THE INTRODUCTION OF OBLIGATORY MILITARY TRAINING IN THE SCHOOLS IN THIS PERIOD MUST BE UNDERSTOOD FROM ABROAD AS A DEMONSTRATIVE ACT AND WILL UNDERCUT THE CREDIBILITY OF THE PEACE POLICY OF THE GDR." THE LETTER ADVISES CHRISTIANS TO REFLECT ON THESE QUESTIONS, TO GIVE THEIR CHILDREN AN EDUCATION BASED ON THESE PRINCIPLES AND ADVISES THEM THAT IF CHRISTIAN FAMILIES, FOR REASONS OF CONSCIENCE, DO NOT PERMIT THEIR CHILDREN TO PARTICIPATE IN THE PRE-MILITARY TRAINING PROGRAM, THE CHURCH WILL SUPPORT THEM (ALTHOUGH IN UNSPECIFIED WAYS).  
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 04 BERLIN 04352 01 OF 02 020446Z

5. COMMENT: IN OUR VIEW THIS PASTORAL LETTER CONSTITUTES A SERIOUS CHALLENGE TO THE REGIME FROM THE CHURCH. THE REGIME HAS NOT YET REACTED TO THE LETTER BUT WE EXPECT SOME RESPONSE TO BE

CONFIDENTIAL

NNN

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 BERLIN 04352 02 OF 02 011005Z  
ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10  
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 ICA-11  
/066 W

-----128095 020513Z /11

R 010938Z JUL 78  
FM AMEMBASSY BERLIN  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7702  
INFO AMEMBASSY WARSAW  
AMEMBASSY BELGRADE  
AMEMBASSY BONN  
AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST  
AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST  
AMEMBASSY LONDON  
AMCONSUL MUNICH  
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW  
AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY PRAGUE  
AMEMBASSY SOFIA  
AMEMBASSY VIENNA  
USMISSION USBERLIN  
USMISSION USNATO  
USDEL MBFR VIENNA

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 02 OF 02 BERLIN 04352

INEVITABLE. HOWEVER, WE BELIEVE THAT IMPORTANT FIGURES IN BOTH THE STATE AND THE CHURCH WOULD LIKE IF POSSIBLE TO AVOID A CLASH WHICH WOULD UNDERCUT THE SLOWLY BUILT-UP DIALOGUE BETWEEN CHURCH AND STATE. THE PERIOD SINCE THE MARCH 6 MEETING BETWEEN ERICH HONECKER AND THE PROTESTANT LEADERSHIP HAS BEEN BY FAR THE MOST FAVORABLE FOR CHURCH-STATE RELATIONS IN MEMORY. MEDIA TREATMENT OF THE CHURCH AND ITS ACTIVITIES HAS BEEN EXTENSIVE AND POSITIVE. THE STATE HAS GIVEN ACTIVE MATERIAL SUPPORT TO SEVERAL  
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 BERLIN 04352 02 OF 02 011005Z

LARGE CHURCH MASS MEETINGS IN SHARP CONTRAST TO ITS PREVIOUS PRACTICE OF ATTEMPTING TO SABOTAGE THEM. IT IS ENTIRELY POSSIBLE THAT THIS FRAGLE, AND BY NO MEANS UNIVERSALLY ACCEPTED PERIOD OF ACCOMMODATION (SEE REFS), MAY SIMPLY COLLAPSE UNDER THE WEIGHT OF A NEW CONFRONTATION. HOWEVER, WE WOULD JUDGE THAT THE STATE AND PARTY LEADERSHIP MAY ATTEMPT TO MEET THIS CHALLENGE WITH SOMETHING LESS THAN A FULL-BLOW CONFRONTATION IN ORDER TO AVOID A SERIOUS DETERIORATION IN CHURCH-STATE RELATIONS. THIS RESPONSE MAY OR MAY NOT COME DURING THE SUMMER MONTHS. HOWEVER, THE PERIOD AFTER SEPTEMBER 1, WHEN INSTANCES OF PASSIVE RESISTANCE TO THE PROGRAM SEEM ALMOST CERTAIN, WILL INEVITABLY DEMONSTRATE THE LEVELS OF TOLERANCE FOR CHURCH ACTIVITIES IN THE HONECKER ERA AND THE AMOUNT OF CLOUT WHICH THE CHURCH CAN REALLY BRING TO BEAR IN DEFENSE OF ITS MEMBERS. END COMMENT.

6. MORE EXTENSIVE BACKGROUND ON THIS ISSUE AND FURTHER COMMENTARY ON RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN CHURCH-STATE RELATIONS FOLLOWS VIA AIRGRAM. BOLEN

CONFIDENTIAL

NNN



## Message Attributes

**Automatic Decaptioning:** X  
**Capture Date:** 01 jan 1994  
**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
**Concepts:** MILITARY TRAINING, YOUTH, CHURCH STATE RELATIONS  
**Control Number:** n/a  
**Copy:** SINGLE  
**Draft Date:** 01 jul 1978  
**Decaption Date:** 01 jan 1960  
**Decaption Note:**  
**Disposition Action:** RELEASED  
**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
**Disposition Case Number:** n/a  
**Disposition Comment:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Date:** 20 Mar 2014  
**Disposition Event:**  
**Disposition History:** n/a  
**Disposition Reason:**  
**Disposition Remarks:**  
**Document Number:** 1978BERLIN04352  
**Document Source:** CORE  
**Document Unique ID:** 00  
**Drafter:** n/a  
**Enclosure:** n/a  
**Executive Order:** GS  
**Errors:** N/A  
**Expiration:**  
**Film Number:** D780273-0094  
**Format:** TEL  
**From:** BERLIN  
**Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Image Path:**  
**ISecure:** 1  
**Legacy Key:** link1978/newtext/t197807103/aaaaditv.tel  
**Line Count:** 216  
**Litigation Code IDs:**  
**Litigation Codes:**  
**Litigation History:**  
**Locator:** TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM  
**Message ID:** 5768566b-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc  
**Office:** ACTION EUR  
**Original Classification:** CONFIDENTIAL  
**Original Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Original Previous Classification:** n/a  
**Original Previous Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Page Count:** 4  
**Previous Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Previous Classification:** CONFIDENTIAL  
**Previous Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Reference:** 78 BERLIN 1751, 78 BERLIN A-24  
**Retention:** 0  
**Review Action:** RELEASED, APPROVED  
**Review Content Flags:**  
**Review Date:** 19 may 2005  
**Review Event:**  
**Review Exemptions:** n/a  
**Review Media Identifier:**  
**Review Release Date:** n/a  
**Review Release Event:** n/a  
**Review Transfer Date:**  
**Review Withdrawn Fields:** n/a  
**SAS ID:** 1855195  
**Secure:** OPEN  
**Status:** NATIVE  
**Subject:** THE EAST GERMAN CHURCH CHALLENGES THE STATE ON MILITARY TRAINING FOR YOUTH  
**TAGS:** PINT, GC, STATE  
**To:** STATE  
**Type:** TE  
**vdkgvwkey:** odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS\_Docs/5768566b-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc  
**Review Markings:**  
Sheryl P. Walter  
Declassified/Released  
US Department of State  
EO Systematic Review  
20 Mar 2014  
**Markings:** Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014